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He was born in Cambridge and was educated as a poor student at Trinity College, becoming eventually a scholar. He completed his medical education abroad. Soon after his appointment to St. Bartholomew's Hospital he published his now famous *Treatise of Melancholy* (1586), which Keynes regards as an important historical document for the psychiatrist, as well as being the forerunner of Burton's *Anatomy*, which was published in 1621. It seems possible also that it may have provided Shakespeare with raw material for *Hamlet*.

In the same year Dr. Bright succeeded in obtaining an interview with Lord Burghley and disclosed to him a system of shorthand which he had invented. The sample which he set before him is in the British Museum, and is illustrated in this volume; it consists in the whole of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, written in vertical columns. He thought that his system would be of great value in many spheres 'to take a speech from any man's mouth as he delivereth it'. Queen Elizabeth was sufficiently impressed to give him the monopoly of teaching and printing in this new system for fifteen years. Thus it is common to designate Bright as the father of modern shorthand.

Bright was a great nationalist, setting forth the virtues of English herbs and medicines in his *English Medicines* (1580), and his country's special contributions to Christianity in his abridgement of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1589), which he dedicated to his first patron, Sir Francis Walsingham. His religious interests, his studies in shorthand and the writing of his books led him greatly to neglect his hospital duties and the care of his patients, to such an extent that after several warnings he was dismissed from his post as Physician on 29 September 1591, by the Governors of the Hospital for 'neglectinge his dewty about the poore of this house'.

After this he left London and retired to Yorkshire, where he was presented with the living of the Rectory of Methley, and continued to practise medicine. He is reputed also to have interested himself in the healing waters of Harrogate, and was evidently something of a musician. He died in Shrewsbury, where his brother William was Public Preacher, in 1615 at the age of sixty-five. He has gained some posthumous credit by having been the great-grandfather of the celebrated Restoration dramatist William Congreve.

W. S. C. COPEMAN

A Biobibliography of Florence Nightingale, compiled by the late W. J. BISHOP, F.L.A. and completed by SUE GOLDIE, B.A. OXON, London, Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1962, pp. 160, 15 illus., 50s.

The publication of this book which attempts for the first time to provide a complete annotated list of Florence Nightingale's writings is a noteworthy event. The book is wisely based upon the list of her printed writings appended to Sir Edward Cook's standard biography of Miss Nightingale. In 1954 an excellent selection of her writings was compiled by Mrs. Lucy Seymer, but apart from this the only work easily accessible is the well-known *Notes on Nursing*. This Biobibliography will therefore be invaluable to the many who take an interest in one or other aspect of Miss Nightingale's remarkable character. The work was begun by the late Mr. W. J. Bishop, who had a unique knowledge of her writings, and the duty of completing it has been competently performed by Miss Sue Goldie.

The writings are divided into nine sections, each dealing chronologically with a separate subject. The sections are headed respectively—Nursing, The Army, Indian and Colonial Welfare, Hospitals, Statistics, Sociology, Memorials and Tributes, Religion and Philosophy, and Miscellaneous Works. Then follows a useful list of

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writings *about* Miss Nightingale and an appendix giving a complete chronological list of all her writings. There is a useful index. Needless to say, the work will be needed in every library of standing.

The writings of Florence Nightingale cover a wide field and display a remarkable intelligence. Her best work was done between 1856 and 1866. She had the rare gift of writing clear and readable prose often conveying emotion to the reader. The best known is the little book *Notes on Nursing*, but perhaps the most vital and spontaneous of her writings was the evidence she gave before the Royal Commission of 1856–7.

The *Notes on Nursing* is a little masterpiece, clearly written and full of common sense almost, but not quite, equally applicable today as it was a century ago. It may not be generally known to what an extent she was encouraged in this project by her constant mentor Dr. Sutherland. The suggestion had been made that she should write a book about nursing, but she was a little doubtful and sent a few pages to Dr. Sutherland inviting his comments. He replied and gave her good advice. (Letter dated 12 February 1859)

If I were you I should go on with it. Get out all your ideas on the subject of nursing and all your experiences. Never mind the arrangement. The great thing is to get the ideas into tangible shape.

He warns her to soften some passages which might offend the doctors for 'it is very important not to offend the doctors'. He explains his ideas of what the book should be:

If you come to teach nursing to the class of people from whom nurses are taken you will have to be simpler and write in precepts, illustrating your precepts when required by a few easy sentences requiring little thought but appealing to the one element that every good nurse must have, namely, common sense. This strikes me as the general plan of such a manual most certain to forward the work.—At all events, go on, put together all your thoughts in any order they come to you and you can easily cut out and arrange afterwards. It will be the least fatiguing process in your present state of health. As we intend to get 'common things' introduced into the school, don't forget that also.

There is no doubt that Florence Nightingale profited by these very practical suggestions. But she also got from Sutherland her antipathy to the idea that 'germs' were the cause of disease. He did not accept the 'germ' theory and the views expressed in *Notes on Nursing* on that subject are very misleading and 'date' the book. Strange to say there is no evidence that Miss Nightingale ever accepted any modern view on infection, though before the end of the nineteenth century it had been accepted everywhere. Hence it was that when a fatal outbreak of puerperal fever broke out in the newly built and well-ventilated St. Thomas's Hospital, equipped with the latest sanitary devices, Miss Nightingale was broken-hearted and could not imagine how it could have occurred. Though she had written on puerperal fever and obtained information from all available sources, including Vienna, she does not seem to have heard of Semmelweiss. Her views on cholera were also formed by Dr. Sutherland's teaching for he even wrote to her concerning 'Snow's fallacy about the destruction of the propagating fluid of cholera', and she did her best to spread that misleading doctrine in India.

Miss Nightingale's evidence before the Commission was not given in person but was given in as a written document. It is well known however that she was the means of getting the Commission set up, that she in effect packed the Commission by personal influence, that she helped to choose the witnesses who should appear before

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it, and even helped to prepare the questions which should be put to them in order to obtain the most telling replies, and that most of the Report was written by her. She had some justification therefore in claiming the Report as being her work. That it was signed by Sidney Herbert does not contradict her claim.

Much of Miss Nightingale's later writings lack the vigour and originality of her earlier works. Her grasp of Indian affairs was phenomenal in view of the fact that she never visited India, but Jowett was very critical of some of her writing about India and she never published the book on *The Zemindar, etc.* In later days also originality left her. She was constantly writing to others to supply ideas. In December 1781 she wrote to Sutherland as follows

I am asked to write in a newspaper article the essence of several volumes—If you chose to put down a series of little axioms for me to enlarge upon and write in my own style (as I did the India letters) that would be a different thing—and I would undertake it.

In the same way she wrote to Miss Crossland, the Home Sister at the Nightingale Training School for Nurses, asking her for any ideas which she might incorporate in the letters which she regularly wrote to nurses at St. Thomas's and elsewhere.

Though Miss Nightingale was conservative on some aspects of nursing it is interesting to find (see p. 30 of this Biobibliography) that she was modern and even ultra-modern in some aspects. For in the 'Suggestions on the subject of providing, training and organizing nurses for the sick poor in workhouse infirmaries' she suggests that girls of fourteen or fifteen might be recruited from the Union Schools and trained in the basic principles of good nursing in the women's wards. She added what might well become a modern slogan 'Perhaps I need scarcely add that nurses must be paid the market price for their labour, like any other workers; and this is yearly rising.' Perhaps we had better close on that note.

ZACHARY COPE

Matthaus Mederer von Mederer und Wuthwehr, edited by ERNST THEODOR NAUK, (Sudhoffs Klassiker der Medizin), Leipzig, Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1961, pp. 72, port., illus., DM.4.90.

One of the pleasant rewards of medical historical reviewing is the opportunity it affords of delving into the lesser known aspects of medical practice and the lives of neglected personalities.

Nowadays, the unity of medicine and surgery is taken for granted unquestionably throughout the world both East and West. It is salutary to remember that this happy state of affairs has virtually only occurred within the last hundred years.

Matthaus Mederer was Professor of Surgery and Obstetrics in Freiburg im Breisgau from 1773 until his death in 1805. During his professional career he championed the cause of medical unity unceasingly. *Medicus, nisi chirurgus, nullus est*, might be his epitaph.

This little book really consists of facsimiles of his two famous pamphlets on this subject. The first was published in November 1773, the second in March 1782. Although to present-day eyes, his point is established, there appears no hint as to how this unity is to be achieved in the conditions of his own time. He not only failed to convince the influential professors of the University of Vienna, but perhaps because of his outspokenness, he also failed in his cherished ambition to hold the surgical Chair in the capital. He had to content himself with the lesser post of Inspector of the Zoological Institute there.